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ABSTRACT

This report explains that in state after state, the percentage of minority teachers is not increasing as fast as the percentage of minority students, and the gap is not narrowing. Many states took action in the 1990s by offering more scholarships and incentives for minority students to attend college and, in several cases, by making major efforts to recruit and retain minority teachers. Despite these efforts, most Southern Regional Education Board states are losing ground. The report examines whether increases in the numbers of minorities enrolling in and completing college are resulting in more minority teachers, providing data on: minority enrollment in higher education and degrees earned and minority students in teacher education programs. Next, it looks at what states are doing to change the situation, including: tapping into the pipeline early with school-to-college partnerships that encourage high school students to consider careers in teaching and offering scholarships and loans to encourage minorities to become teachers. Finally, it discusses how alternative paths to teaching may be more productive, examining various state models and the federal Troops to Teachers program. (Contains 16 references.) (SM)

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Spinning Our Wheels:

Minority Teacher Supply in SREB States

2003

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Goals for Education

1. All children are ready for the first grade.
2. Achievement in the early grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
3. Achievement in the middle grades for all groups of students exceeds national averages and performance gaps are closed.
4. All young adults have a high school diploma — or, if not, pass the GED tests.
5. All recent high school graduates have solid academic preparation and are ready for postsecondary education and a career.
6. Adults who are not high school graduates participate in literacy and job-skills training and further education.
7. The percentage of adults who earn postsecondary degrees or technical certificates exceeds national averages.
8. Every school has higher student performance and meets state academic standards for all students each year.
9. Every school has leadership that results in improved student performance — and leadership begins with an effective school principal.
10. **Every student is taught by qualified teachers.**
11. The quality of colleges and universities is regularly assessed and funding is targeted to quality, efficiency and state needs.
12. The state places a high priority on an education *system* of schools, colleges and universities that is accountable.

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Spinning Our Wheels:

Minority Teacher Supply in SREB States

The problem can be stated simply: In state after state, the percentage of minority teachers is not increasing as fast as the percentage of minority students, and the gap is not narrowing.

It's not a new problem. In the late 1980s the Southern Regional Education Board spotlighted the steady decline of minorities in the region's teacher work force. SREB attributed the decline to the dwindling numbers of minority students enrolling in and completing higher education and to the limited number of aggressive incentive and assistance programs to recruit minority teachers.

Many states took action in the 1990s by offering more scholarships and incentives for minority students to attend college and, in several cases, by making major efforts to recruit and retain minority teachers. Despite these efforts, the percentages of minority teachers in SREB states have not increased significantly. A few states have held their own — with enough minority teachers entering the work force to counter the tide of teachers who retire or leave the classroom for other reasons. But most SREB states are losing ground.

Are the policies and practices of the last dozen years proving ineffective? Are we just spinning our wheels?

Some perspective

Nearly 18 million African-American, Asian, Hispanic and Native American students attend U.S. elementary and secondary schools. Minorities account for 43 percent of students in SREB states but only 21 percent of teachers. SREB states' percentages of minority students range from 5 percent to 57 percent. Outside the SREB region, 35 percent of students and 13 percent of teachers are minorities.

We know it does not take a minority teacher to teach a minority student, but diversity among teachers is important. Minority teachers bring positive images and varied perspectives to their students. They serve as role models for all students and often can share insights with other teachers about helping minority students succeed.

Research was compiled by Anjanette M. Bolich, SREB research associate for Educational Policies. For information contact joan.lord@sreb.org.

Between 1989 and 2000, the percentage of minority students increased in most SREB states. In several states, the increase was quite large. In Florida, for example, the minority student population jumped from 35 percent to 46 percent. In Texas the proportion of minority students grew from 49 percent to 57 percent.

Yet in many SREB states the teacher work force has become less diverse. Of the 12 states for which comparable data are available, seven (Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina) have seen a decrease since the late 1980s in the percentage of minority teachers. One (Virginia) has held steady, and four (Florida, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas) have experienced an increase. Among the four states in which the percentage of minority teachers increased, Oklahoma had the greatest gain (from 7 percent to 14 percent), followed by Texas (23 percent to 27 percent), Florida (20 percent to 23 percent) and Kentucky (4 percent to 5 percent). (See Table 1.)

Of the 12 states with comparable data, only Mississippi has shown a net decline in the percentage of minority students since 1989 (56 percent to 52 percent). Its percentage of minority teachers slipped to 34 percent (from 35 percent in 1989).

Table 1

	Minorities as Percentages of K-12 Enrollment		Minorities as Percentages of Teachers	
	1989	2000	1989	2000
Alabama	38%	38%	25%	20%
Arkansas	25	28	14	13
Delaware	NA	38	NA	15
Florida	35	46	20	23
Georgia	39	45	NA	22
Kentucky	11	11	4	5
Louisiana	43	51	32	28
Maryland	40	46	23	21
Mississippi	56	52	35	34
North Carolina	32	38	19	17
Oklahoma	21	34	7	14
South Carolina	45	45	22	18
Tennessee	23	27	NA	15
Texas	49	57	23	27
Virginia	27	36	19	19
West Virginia	4	5	NA	4

Sources: Southern Regional Education Board, *Preparing More Minority Teachers: Why the Decline in Minority Teachers?,* 1989; National Center for Education Statistics, *Overview of Elementary and Secondary Schools and Districts: School Year 1999-2000;* National Center for Education Statistics, *Schools and Staffing Survey, 1999-2000* special calculations; and state education agencies

NA: Not available

Comparable data on minority teachers are not available for Delaware, Georgia, Tennessee and West Virginia. However, state reports show a slight increase in Georgia and a steady percentage in Tennessee since the mid-1990s. In Georgia minority teachers accounted for about 21 percent of the work force in 1995 and 22 percent by 2001. During that period, the percentage of minority students increased from 41 percent to 44 percent. African-American teachers accounted for about 11 percent of the teachers in Tennessee in 1994 and in 2001. During that time, the African-American student population increased somewhat — from 23 percent to 24 percent. From 1997 to 2001, Delaware's minority teacher population remained stable at 13 percent while the percentage of minority students increased from 36 percent to 39 percent.

Are increases in the numbers of minorities enrolling in and completing college resulting in more minority teachers?

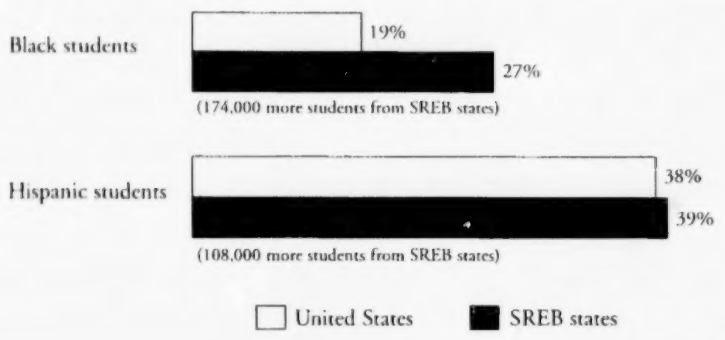
In the late 1980s the prevailing view was that increasing the numbers of minority students entering and completing college would lead to a larger pool of potential minority teachers. Was that view correct?

Minority enrollment in higher education and degrees earned

In the 1990s the numbers of minority students in higher education increased dramatically in SREB states. (See Figure 1.) By the end of the decade, minorities accounted for the growth in enrollment at colleges and universities — both in the SREB states and in the nation.

Figure 1

Percent Change in College Enrollment, 1992 to 1999



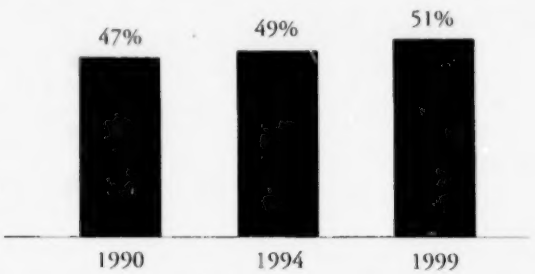
Source: *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*

Some facts:

- African-American and Hispanic students represent at least 25 percent of undergraduates in nine SREB states (Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina and Texas). In Georgia, Louisiana and Mississippi, at least 30 percent of undergraduates in public colleges and universities are African-American. Hispanic students account for more than 15 percent of undergraduate enrollment in Florida and Texas.
- More than half of all African-American undergraduates in the nation attend colleges and universities in the SREB states. (See Figure 2.)
- Between 1992 and 1998, the percentage of African-Americans who earned bachelor's degrees increased by 29 percent in the SREB states, compared with a national increase of 5 percent.

Figure 2

African-American Undergraduate Enrollment in SREB States as a Percentage of the Nation



Source: *SREB Fact Book on Higher Education*

Minority students in teacher education programs

More minority students are enrolling in and completing college in SREB states, but are more minority students planning to become teachers? The answer in *some* states is a qualified "yes." Rates of minority enrollment in and graduation from teacher education programs have increased in some SREB states but decreased in others.

In Kentucky the number of minorities enrolled in teacher education programs increased from 398 in 1995 to 788 in 2000. The state's percentage of minority teachers remained at about 5 percent.

Overall admissions into teacher education programs in Oklahoma dropped by 43 percent between 1996 and 2001. While admissions of Native American students increased slightly over this period, admissions of most other minorities declined. In a survey of the deans of teacher education programs in Oklahoma, respondents cited several possible reasons for the overall decrease in admissions to these programs. More than half of those surveyed said that low salaries for teachers dissuade students from pursuing teaching. Nearly half of the deans said that many students had opted for alternative certification routes rather than traditional preparation.

Teacher education programs in Florida public universities admitted 263 minority students in 1986; these students accounted for about 10 percent of teacher education students. In 2000, minority students accounted for 23 percent (1,019 students) of the 4,463 students admitted into teacher education programs.

In some SREB states, enrollments in teacher education programs are increasing, but minority enrollments in those programs are not. For example, minorities accounted for 835 (16 percent) of the 5,263 full-time students in North Carolina's undergraduate programs for teacher education in 1998. In 2001, there were 6,371 undergraduate students in teacher education programs, but only 777 (12 percent) were minority students.

Minority graduates of teacher education programs

While the numbers of teacher education graduates have increased in some states, relatively few of these graduates are minorities.

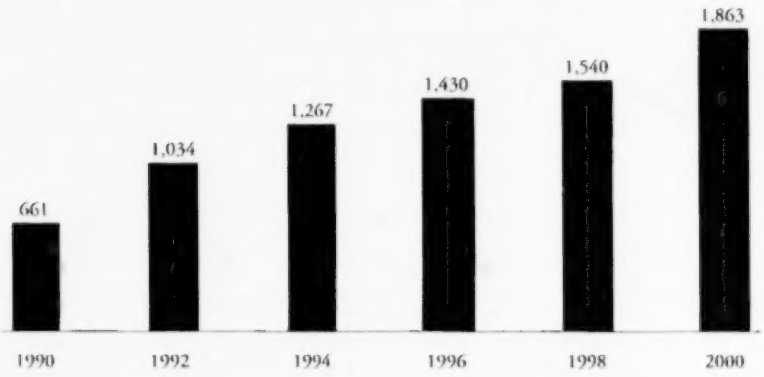
For example, even though the number of minority graduates from teacher education programs in Kentucky more than doubled between 1995 and 2000, the number remained small. There were about 300 minority graduates from these programs in 2000.

The number of African-American graduates from teacher education programs in South Carolina increased slowly but steadily between 1989 and 1996, after which the growth rate slowed significantly. In 1989 there were 132 African-American graduates of these programs. In 1996 the number had reached 402, but by 2000 there were only 293.

In Maryland, the number of minority graduates from teacher education programs has increased since 1997, while the total number of graduates has decreased. In 1997 minorities accounted for 338 (14 percent) of the 2,497 graduates of teacher education programs in Maryland. In 2001 minorities accounted for 421 (18 percent) of the 2,332 graduates of teacher education programs. The state expects the overall number of teacher education graduates to increase by 2004.

The numbers of minority graduates of all teacher education programs in Florida increased steadily during the 1990s (see Figure 3), but the percentages remained low. In 2000, 12 percent of teacher education graduates were African-American and 16 percent were Hispanic.

Figure 3
Trends in Minority Graduates of
Teacher Education Programs in Florida



Source: Florida Department of Education

Lack of racial and gender diversity among teacher education graduates is a problem for SREB states and, indeed, most of the nation. For every one African-American male graduate of Tennessee programs, there are 10 African-American female, 15 white male and 65 white female graduates. In Oklahoma, for each minority (primarily Native American and African American) male graduate of teacher education programs, there are 1.5 minority female, 3.5 white male and eight white female graduates.

The 2000 Census showed that Hispanic populations are growing in many SREB states. Florida's experience suggests that increases in the Hispanic teacher population are not keeping pace. In the last six years, the Hispanic teacher population has tripled in Florida — to 8.6 percent of the total. But Florida's student population is almost 20 percent Hispanic.

What are states doing to change the situation?

Tapping into the pipeline early: School-to-college partnerships

Many SREB states have school-to-college partnerships to introduce high school students to careers in teaching. Some are geared toward encouraging minority students to consider teaching. Offering "early interest" programs is a sound strategy. A Public Agenda survey found that 52 percent of new teachers said they had decided to teach before they went to college.

The South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment has several initiatives to get more students in the middle grades and high school interested in teaching. The Pro Team program was designed to recruit minority and male students into teaching. It gives students in the middle grades the opportunity to take a semester-long or yearlong course that introduces them to the teaching profession. During the 2000-2001 school year, more than 9,000 middle grades students participated in the program; more than 5,000 of these students were minorities.

Another South Carolina program targets high school students. The Teacher Cadet program began in 1985 with four high schools. It now operates in 144 high schools and each year reaches about 2,300 students. About 28 percent are minority students. The program, offered through partnerships among school districts and universities, gives high school juniors and seniors an in-depth curriculum and hands-on experience in teaching. Students explore issues in education and innovative teaching practices. Through an arrangement with the state Department of Education, each program participant earns a full Carnegie unit of honors credit as well as college credit.

The South Carolina Center for Teacher Recruitment has collected comprehensive data on the impact of these recruitment programs. Nearly 30,000 high-achieving high school students have completed the Teacher Cadet program since 1985. External evaluations show that 36 percent of all students who participate in that program plan to pursue teaching, and nearly half of the students intending to become teachers said they preferred to teach in subject areas, including special education, in which there are critical shortages. In a 2000-2001 survey, 91 percent of all Teacher Cadet participants said the program had made them aware of the state's critical need for teachers in certain subjects. In 2000-2001, the average SAT score of program participants was 92 points higher than the South Carolina average for all students. A 2002 report showed similar results.

Oklahoma has a similar program that provides a curriculum and teacher training. The Oklahoma Minority Teacher Recruitment Center has supported the Oklahoma Teacher Cadet program since 1991. A recent sample survey of past participants in the program found that 80 percent had enrolled in college and that 85 percent of those who earned education degrees were teaching in Oklahoma schools. Statewide, 39 percent of all those who earn education degrees from Oklahoma institutions are hired to teach.

Scholarships and loans

Many SREB states offer scholarships to encourage minorities to become teachers. Most scholarships require the recipient to agree to teach for a certain time. If the recipient does not teach or fails to complete other requirements, the scholarship becomes a loan, which the student must repay in full, plus interest.

Recipients of Kentucky's Minority Educator and Recruitment Scholarship receive up to $5,000 annually (depending on funding allocation and number of participants) toward tuition and fees at undergraduate or graduate programs in teacher education. Since 1992 more than 1,500 students have received scholarships. Each recipient agrees to teach one semester or term in Kentucky schools or colleges for each semester or term in which he or she receives the scholarship. Funding for the program has increased in the last decade (from $100,000 to $500,000 annually). In 1992 only 25 African-Americans graduated from teacher education programs in Kentucky; in 2000, nearly 300 minorities graduated from these programs.

Since 1996 the Florida Fund for Minority Teachers has awarded scholarships to African-American, Hispanic, Asian-American and American Indian/Alaskan Native students. The $4,000 annual scholarship is available for a maximum of three consecutive years to Florida residents who enroll as juniors or seniors in state-approved programs for teacher education. These students must commit to teach for one year in Florida public schools in exchange for every year they receive scholarships. More than 500 students are enrolled in the program.

Tennessee's Minority Teaching Fellows Scholarship Program provides funding for a maximum of 116 students per year. Students may receive up to $5,000 per year for as many as four years and must agree to teach for one year in exchange for every year they receive scholarships. About 25 to 30 students graduate each year from the program, which began in 1989.

The Arkansas Minority Teacher Scholars Program provides scholarships to African-American, Asian-American and Hispanic juniors and seniors in teacher education programs at public or private colleges. Students may receive up to $5,000 per year and must agree to teach for five years after they earn state certification. The loan is forgiven at a rate of 20 percent per year for each year the recipient teaches. The teaching requirement can be reduced to three years if the recipient teaches in an Arkansas public school and meets at least one of the following conditions:

- teaches a subject in which there is a teacher shortage — mathematics, science or foreign languages;
- teaches in one of the 42 counties that make up the Delta region;
- is an African-American man who agrees to teach at an elementary school; or
- serves as a guidance counselor.

Other SREB states have scholarships and loans that have provisions designed to encourage minorities to consider teaching. For example, Virginia's Teaching Scholarship Loan Program provides up to $3,720 per year in scholarship loans to applicants who agree to teach in subject areas in which there are critical shortages of teachers. Minorities can receive the loans for any teaching area. All recipients must agree to teach for one year in exchange for every year they receive loans. Since the program began in 1996, 127 minority students have received loans.

The North Carolina Teaching Fellows Program was established in 1986 to offer scholarships and an intensive induction program to college students who commit to teach in North Carolina schools. The program attempts to reserve about 20 percent of the scholarships for minority students. Recipients receive $6,500 per year. Minorities currently account for about 28 percent of the scholarship recipients. About 72 percent of all graduates are teaching in North Carolina schools.

The Call Me MISTER project is an effort to recruit and retain 200 African-American male teachers for South Carolina elementary schools. Candidates for funding must be students at one of three historically black, private institutions: Benedict College, Claflin University or Morris College. The first group of 60 men began receiving tuition assistance and academic, social and cultural support in August 2000. Recipients must commit to teach for one year in South Carolina schools in exchange for every year of support they receive.

In addition to state-level programs, there are several scholarship programs offered by colleges and universities in SREB states. Jackson State University in Mississippi, Western Kentucky University and the University of Delaware offer scholarships to minority students who enroll in teacher education programs.

Alternative programs may be more productive

"States need to look beyond new college graduates to people who may want to change careers or former teachers who may want to return to the classroom."

— **Southern Regional Education Board, 1988**

Alternative paths to teaching

Alternative certification policies effectively have increased the numbers of minority teachers in some SREB states. These states have created new pathways into teaching for people without undergraduate training in teacher education who otherwise would not meet the requirements for certification and licensure.

Most alternative-certification pathways are geared toward people with non-teaching degrees. Many states require candidates to pass basic skills tests and/or subject-area knowledge exams such as PRAXIS. Candidates acquire teaching skills through programs provided by teacher education programs at colleges and universities and/or by local education agencies.

The National Center for Education Information reports that 45 states — including all 16 SREB states — have alternative certification programs, but these programs vary in scope and impact.

Texas has one of the nation's best-known, most extensive programs for alternative certification of teachers. The Alternative Certification Program, which began in 1985 in the Houston Independent School District, now includes 34 local programs. Forty-one percent of those who complete the program are minorities.

The Georgia Teacher Alternative Preparation Program is an option for those who have the basic qualifications to teach in state elementary, middle or high schools but have not completed formal training in a college's teacher education program. The alternative certification program's pilot phase in 2001 involved about 750 participants. Of those who reported their ethnicity, 40 percent were African-American, Asian-American or Hispanic. The program is expanding and will include longitudinal evaluation studies and Web-based training for mentor teachers.

Since Delaware's Alternative Routes to Certification program began in 1997, 164 candidates have participated. After candidates complete a one-year program of institutes, classes and seminars, they can teach in Delaware public high schools or charter schools. The candidates are assigned mentors, with whom they must meet at least once every two weeks for the first 10 weeks and another four times in the next 20 weeks. A school supervisor observes classroom performance for at least 30 weeks — and up to two years. While only 13 percent of Delaware's teachers are minorities, minorities account for 29 percent of the participants in the alternative certification program.

Troops to Teachers program

The federal Troops to Teachers program offers states another tool to increase the number of minority teachers. The program, begun in 1993 and managed by the Defense Activity for Non-Traditional Education Support (DANTES), targets those who are retiring from or leaving the military. Troops to Teachers supports teacher training and helps participants find jobs as teachers in public schools. Thirty-two states — including most SREB states — have Troops to Teachers programs. In the SREB states, minorities account for 38 percent of those who complete the program and are hired as teachers.

Since 1995 the Texas Troops to Teachers program has placed more than 1,300 new teachers in more than 300 school districts. Most earn certification through the state Alternative Certification Program. A sample survey of Texas' program found that 82 percent of participants were men and about 35 percent were minorities. Eighty-four percent of participants in the Troops to Teachers program still were teaching seven years after they began. Only 65 percent of people who receive initial teaching certificates in Texas remain teachers after five years.

Where do we go from here?

What can we say about what *has* worked? How effective were school-to-college partnerships that targeted students in the middle grades and high school? Did scholarships, loans and other incentives pay off? Which ones and why? Can alternative certification programs produce more minority teachers than traditional routes?

Some of these strategies have helped states hold their own or, at least, get enough new minority teachers to replace those who retire. Some strategies have been successful in increasing the percentages of minority students who attend college and who become teachers. Even so, the gap between the population of minority teachers and the growing population of minority students is not narrowing.

States must not give up. States need to determine which programs work and how to make them work even better. While many states are *beginning* to track these programs' results, minority-recruitment efforts need comprehensive data to be effective. Without such data, it is impossible to say whether programs are producing acceptable returns on their investments.

States' efforts to recruit and retain minority teachers have revealed at least one thing: Scattershot policies will not get the job done. If state leaders really believe in the value of teacher diversity, they must stay the course. To do anything less is to be satisfied with just spinning their wheels.

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State policy-makers need to ask several important questions:

Are enough data on minority teachers being collected and reported?

States have not assessed adequately the effects of their recruitment and incentive programs, largely because they lack the data to do so. State leaders need to know how the supply of minority teachers has changed. What information is available about the numbers of new minority teachers and retiring minority teachers? How many minority students are completing teacher education programs? How many end up teaching?

What are colleges and universities doing to attract more minority students into teacher education programs and to increase the numbers of minorities who graduate from these programs?

Other than financial aid, what types of support are available to minority students? (SREB's Doctoral Scholars Program has demonstrated that minority students who receive faculty mentoring and support often are more likely to complete their doctorates. The same likely is true of students at all levels who receive mentoring and support.) What types of partnerships have colleges and universities developed with local school systems to encourage minority students who are enrolled in teacher education programs to serve as mentors or role models for high school students? Are minority teachers invited to serve as adjunct faculty or mentors in undergraduate programs for teacher education?

What are the effects of early recruitment programs?

School-to-college partnerships get minority students interested in teaching, but what is done to sustain that interest? How many students in the middle grades and high school participate in early recruitment programs each year? Of those, how many enroll in teacher education programs? Can students receive college credit for participating in early recruitment programs? Can they receive special or early admission into teacher education programs? Do they receive the same level of support in college that they experienced in the early recruitment programs?

Do scholarship and loan programs attract more minority students into teaching?

There has been little research on whether scholarship and loan programs recruit people who otherwise would not have become teachers. Which features of these programs appeal most to potential students and why? How many recipients become teachers and remain in classrooms? States are spending millions of dollars on these programs without collecting this basic information about program quality.

Do programs aimed at career-changers help?

Finally, states that do collect data about the race/ethnicity of participants in alternative certification programs have found that large percentages of them are minorities. More information about these programs and why they appeal to minorities could help states focus their efforts to increase teacher diversity. Could these programs be bolstered and expanded with targeted salary incentives and high-quality training programs that help career-changers develop the special skills to work effectively with students?

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